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SUBJECT: LESSONS LEARNED - CRISIS MANAGEMENT EXERCISE

¶1. Summary: Embassy Manila hosted a Crisis Management Exercise September 17 and 18. Post extends thanks to instructor Douglas Kinney for conducting a successful exercise.

¶2. Format of the CME: The three hour Overview Training was appropriate to explain the need for such exercises, where the EAP and the CME fit into Post's overall planning, and stimulate interest in the second day's session. The four-hour tabletop exercise was appropriate to allow participants to understand the dramatic incident and its ramifications, and then begin to address the facets of the problems inherent in initial crisis management.

¶3. A note for future planning especially for large volume visa issuance posts is to allow as much advance notice as possible to be given to the consular section so that more entry-level interviewing officers may be able to attend. Appointments are scheduled weeks in advance, making it imperative to give the consular section a chance to adjust the number of interviews.

¶4. Selection of Scenarios: The high magnitude earthquake with its attendant problems was an excellent choice for a post with multiple compounds, dispersed offices, housing, and schools. The scenario allowed unique solutions to be raised as possibilities, such as using bicycles and motorcycles to travel otherwise unusable streets during the first crucial hours when normal communications and travel may not be possible.

¶5. Intervention by the Controller: The controller encouraged the participants to presume specific conditions as the scenario unfolded and did not interrupt, nor pressure the group in any particular direction. The controller was a resource when needed, but otherwise was appropriately in the background.

¶6. Controller's observations for Post Management: The controller praised Post for excellent tradecraft, and the depth of leadership in the EAC and supporting sections. The controller complemented our team, saying that the full Emergency Action Committee, EAC alternates, key LE staff, and interested officers participated enthusiastically and performed very well. The active participation of the DCM and EAC members was important to the success of the exercise, and Manila's LE staff proved to be unflappable and resourceful as conditions developed.

¶7. Different response post-exercise: While some suggestions may require negotiation with the host government to implement, some of the discussions during the exercise could easily change previously-planned responses by some departments and agencies. Members of the EAC learned of capabilities of constituent sections and agencies, and will incorporate these into the EAP. A revelation during the exercise was the IBB has the capability to redirect its transmitter to broadcast nationwide at 1 million watts, with host nation approval.

¶8. Lessons learned: Post properly focused on concern for others throughout the exercise. Participants created worst case scenarios

to fully explore possibilities and responses, demonstrating confidence in their staff's abilities. Post addressed the question of children at schools early to allow parents to focus on other responsibilities during a crisis. The EAC assumed correctly that the cell phone system, especially depended upon here in the Philippines, would be the first system to go down in such a crisis, and tried to work around it. Post has immediate and accurate information on available water, fuel, and power at the Embassy and Seafont Compounds during the first critical weeks of such a crisis.

Overall, Post produced a 45-point Lessons Learned target list and a ten-point Best Practices list.

¶9. CMT Overview training: This session was enhanced by the materials sent in advance and a well-formulized presentation. The PowerPoint slides were well designed and useful to the discussion. The controller drew participation from the audience, and the participants responded positively by inviting more of their colleagues and subordinates to the second day's session.

¶10. Optimal frequency of CMEs: While a twenty-four month cycle would allow for a greater overlap of participants - thus balancing experience with innovation, Post also recognizes that the large number of unaccompanied posts visited by FSI/CMS does not allow for such a robust bi-yearly schedule.

KENNEY